

10-2018

A Biographical Study of Jeremiah

Harold Willmington

Liberty University, hwillmington@liberty.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ot_biographies



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Willmington, Harold, "A Biographical Study of Jeremiah" (2018). *Old Testament Biographies*. 48.
https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ot_biographies/48

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the A Biographical Study of Individuals of the Bible at Scholars Crossing. It has been accepted for inclusion in Old Testament Biographies by an authorized administrator of Scholars Crossing. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu.

Jeremiah

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

I. The personal history of Jeremiah

A. Jeremiah, the man

1. The selection

- a. He was called into full-time service during the reign of Josiah (1:1-10).
- b. He was to remain unmarried (16:2).
 - (1) Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah, a priest living in Anathoth, some three miles northeast of Jerusalem in the land of Benjamin (1:1).
 - (2) He received his call to full-time service during the thirteenth year of godly King Josiah (1:2).
- c. Jeremiah at first protested this call (as Moses once did — see Exodus 3-4), pleading his youth as an excuse (1:4-6).
- d. He was quickly, however, reassured by God (1:7-10).
 - (1) God's witness would be beside him.
 - (2) God's words would be within him.

2. The symbols—As he began his ministry, God showed him three things which underlined the nature and importance of his call.

- a. He was shown an almond tree rod (1:11). Because it flowers earlier than the other trees, the almond signified the near fulfillment of God's proposed judgment.
- b. He saw a pot of boiling water, tipping southward from the north. This symbolized the Babylonian invasion (1:13).
- c. He then saw two baskets of figs in the temple. One basket had fresh, well-ripened figs, but the other contained rotten ones (24:1-3). God explained that the fresh figs represented the Jewish exiles in Babylon (men such as Daniel and Ezekiel), while the rotten fruit depicted Zedekiah and his corrupt officials (24:4-8).

3. The sign

- a. Jeremiah was ordered to make a yoke and fasten it upon his neck with leather thongs (27:1-2).
- b. He was then to send messages to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon through their ambassadors in Jerusalem, warning them that God had given their nations over to Babylon. Those who submitted and wore the yoke of punishment with true repentance would be spared, but those who refused would be destroyed (27:3-11).

- c. After God had used Nebuchadnezzar to punish Judah and his neighbor nations, he would chastise Babylon itself (27:7). Judah was reassured that after the Babylonian Captivity she would be gathered back to Jerusalem (27:22).
- 4. The search
 - a. He was given a command reminiscent of the Greek philosopher Diogenes, who repeatedly roamed the streets of Athens with a lantern trying to find an honest man. God had once made a similar arrangement with Abraham concerning Sodom (Gen. 18:23-33). "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it." (5:1).
 - b. Jeremiah admitted this dreadful condition existed among the poor and ignorant, but felt he could find honest men within the ranks of Judah's educated and rich rulers. But they too had utterly rejected God (5:4-5).
 - c. After a fruitful 31-year reign, Josiah died. A weeping prophet attended his funeral (2 Chron. 34:1; 35:25). Judah's last good king had gone, and it would be downhill spiritually from that point on.
- 5. The settlement—Jeremiah visited the settlement where the Rechabite families lived.
 - a. These individuals belonged to a religious order founded by Jonadab, son of Rechab, during the reign of Jehu (841-814 B.C.). They assisted in the eradication of Baalism from Israel. Avoiding city life, they lived as shepherds, drinking no wine.
 - b. Jeremiah was commanded to test them by offering them wine. They immediately refused (35:1-6).
 - c. Jeremiah then related this sterling example to Judah, and contrasted the obedience of the Rechabites to the disobedience of Jerusalem (35:12-19).
- 6. The sale
 - a. Jeremiah, while in prison, was ordered by God to buy a field from his cousin Hanameel. This was to illustrate that in spite of the advancing Babylonian armies, "houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land" (32:15).
 - b. The background of all this: God told Jeremiah that his cousin, Hanameel, was soon to visit him and attempt to sell the prophet a farm he owned in Anathoth. Jeremiah was to buy it for 17 shekels of silver (32:6-12). Baruch was then to place the sealed deed in a pottery jar and bury it. All this was to demonstrate that someday people would once again own property in Judah, and buy and sell (32:14-15).

- c. Jeremiah was comforted at this time in prison by God's gracious promise. "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (33:3).
 - d. These tremendous and thrilling "things" are listed in chapters 30-31 and 33. They include the following:
 - (1) In spite of the impending Babylonian Captivity, the time was coming when God would heal Jerusalem's hurt and give her prosperity and peace (33:4-6).
 - (2) He still loved Israel with an everlasting love (31:3).
 - (3) Israel would be gathered into Palestine from the earth's farthest ends (30:3, 10-11; 31:8-9, 12).
7. The sufferings
- a. The sources of Jeremiah's sufferings
 - (1) His family
 - (2) His hometown
 - (3) The religious world
 - (4) The political world
 - b. The nature of his sufferings
 - (1) His own brothers and family turned against him, plotting to kill him (12:6).
 - (2) The men of Anathoth attempted to kill him (11:21-23).
 - (3) Pashur, the chief temple priest, had him whipped and put in stocks (20:1-3).
 - (4) He was almost murdered by a wild mob of priests and prophets after one of his messages (26:7-9).
 - (a) He preached a sermon at the temple gate and was nearly killed by an angry mob for predicting the temple would be destroyed (26:6-9).
 - (b) He was defended by some of Judah's wise old men, who reminded the angry mob that Jeremiah's message was like that of the prophet Micah (Jer. 26:17-19; Mic. 3:12).
 - (5) He was ridiculed by a false prophet named Hananiah (28).
 - (a) Jeremiah was accused of lying by a false prophet named Hananiah who had predicted the Babylonian Captivity would last only for two years and that those already in exile (such as King Jehoiachin, Daniel, Ezekiel, etc.) would be returned, along with all the temple treasury which had been taken (28:1-4).
 - (b) To dramatize his accusation Hananiah broke the yoke worn by Jeremiah (28:10-11).
 - (6) He was threatened by King Jehoiakim (36:26).
 - (7) He was arrested, flogged, and accused of treason (37:11-16).

- (a) Jeremiah attempted to visit the land of Benjamin on one occasion to inspect some property he had bought (37:11-12).
 - (b) However, a guard named Irijah arrested him at the city gate and accused him of defecting to the Babylonians (37:13).
 - (c) Jeremiah denied this, but was flogged and thrown into prison (37:14-16).
 - (d) He was secretly sent for by Zedekiah, the king (37:17). Zedekiah placed him in the palace prison instead of returning him to the dungeon he was formerly in (37:21).
- (8) He was cast down into an empty but filthy prison (38:1-13).
- (a) In the palace, pressure from the religious officials who despised Jeremiah eventually forced Zedekiah to return the prophet to a more crude confinement.
 - (b) This time he was lowered by ropes into an empty cistern in the prison yard, where he soon sank down into a thick layer of mire at the bottom (38:1-6).
 - (c) Eventually an Ethiopian friend Ebed-melech, persuaded Zedekiah to remove him from this filthy place. It took 30 men to haul him from the cistern. He was returned to the prison palace (38:7-13).
 - (d) Jeremiah again predicted the fall of Jerusalem (38:14-17; see also 32:1-5). He would remain in prison until the city was taken (38:28).
- (9) He had his original manuscript burned by wicked King Jehoiakim (36:21-23).
- (a) God ordered Jeremiah to have his scribe Baruch write down all those oral messages he had been given for the past 23 years (36:1-2).
 - (b) Baruch did this and read them to the people in the temples (36:8). He then was invited to read them to the religious officials. When he finished, they were badly frightened and decided King Jehoiakim should also hear them (36:14-16).
 - (c) An official named Jehudi thereupon read them to Jehoiakim as the sullen king sat in front of his fireplace. As Jehudi finished reading three or four columns, Jehoiakim would take his knife, slit off the section of the roll, and throw it into the fire. Finally, the entire scroll was destroyed (36:21-23).
 - (d) Jeremiah was then commanded to rewrite the burned sections plus a good deal of additional material, including some fearful words about Jehoiakim: "Thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will

bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not. Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words" (36:30-32).

- (e) After Jehoiakim had burned the scroll, Baruch became despondent. It had probably taken him a year to write the material. God then both warned and encouraged him through Jeremiah (45:1-5).
- (10) He experienced frustration and depression (20:7-9, 14-18).
 - (a) Jeremiah had become so frustrated over his inability to call Judah back to God that he wrote the following: "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (20:9; see also 1 Kings 19:3-4; Jon. 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 9:16).
 - (b) At this time, he uttered one of the most despondent prayers in all the Bible: "Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which the LORD overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide; Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always great with me. Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?" (20:14-18).

B. Jeremiah, the minister

1. Rulers he ministered under

- a. Josiah—Jeremiah was called by God during the reign of Josiah, Judah's last good king.
- b. Jehoiakim—This wicked king burned Jeremiah's original written prophecy scroll.
- c. Jehoiachin—This 90-day wonder was soundly condemned by Jeremiah (22:24-30).
- d. Zedekiah—The prophet suffered much under the reign of Zedekiah, Judah's final king.
 - (1) Zedekiah sent word that Jeremiah asking for his prayers after Nebuchadnezzar had declared war on Judah (2:1-2).
 - (2) Jeremiah sent word back to the wicked king stating that prayers were useless on this subject, for God would use the Babylonians to punish

Jerusalem, and Zedekiah himself was to be given over to Nebuchadnezzar (21:3-7).

- (3) Jeremiah told Zedekiah that Jerusalem would be burned and he was to be captured and carried into Babylon (34:1-5).
 - (4) Zedekiah had proclaimed freedom for all the slaves in the city, but the owners had gone back on their word. Jeremiah rebuked those rich Jewish homeowners who had violated the Mosaic Law, which demanded all Hebrew servants to be set free after serving six years (34:8-16).
 - (5) Pharaoh Hophra's Egyptian armies had arrived to aid Judah in fighting Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah warned Zedekiah that their political alliance would fail, for Nebuchadnezzar would defeat the Egyptians (37:5-10). Zedekiah, however, refused to take the counsel of Jeremiah (2 Chron. 36:12).
- e. Nebuchadnezzar—Jeremiah was treated with respect by the great Babylonian conqueror.
- (1) Zedekiah attempted to escape the doomed city but was captured near Jericho and brought back to Jerusalem. Here he was forced to witness the execution of his own sons, and then submit to the agony of having his eyes gouged out (39:4-7; 52:6-11).
 - (2) Nebuchadnezzar instructed his chief-of-staff, Nebuzaradan, to treat Jeremiah with kindness (39:11-12).
 - (3) Jeremiah was released from prison and taken by Nebuzaradan to Ramah. Here he was offered his choice of going on to Babylon or returning to Jerusalem. Jeremiah chose to return and was placed under the protection of the new Jewish governor of Jerusalem, a man named Gedaliah (39:14; 40:1-6).
- f. Gedaliah—He was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to govern the fallen city of Jerusalem.
- (1) Gedaliah attempted to institute a moderate post-war administration over the devastated city of Jerusalem (40:7-12).
 - (2) This soon aroused the fury of a Jewish rebel leader named Ishmael, who plotted to assassinate Gedaliah. The governor was warned of this plot by a man named Johanan but refused to take it seriously (40:13-16).
 - (3) Gedaliah was murdered by Ishmael along with many other Jewish officials, pilgrims, and some Babylonian soldiers. Some of their bodies were hurled down into an empty cistern (41:1-9).
 - (4) Johanan arrived upon the scene of the massacre and soon restored order (41:11-16).
- g. Johanan—He took over after the tragic assassination of Gedaliah and later forced Jeremiah to accompany a Jewish remnant to Egypt.

- (1) Johanan asked Jeremiah to determine God's will for the tiny Jewish remnant still in Jerusalem (42:1-6).
- (2) After a 10-day prayer session with God, Jeremiah was told the Lord desired the remnant to remain in Jerusalem and not go to Egypt, as some were already planning to do (46:7-22).
- (3) Upon hearing this unwelcome report, Johanan and other leaders accused Jeremiah of lying. They then disobeyed the clearly revealed word of God by going to Egypt. Jeremiah was forced to accompany them (43:1-7).
- (4) Upon reaching Egypt, many of the Jews resorted to their old habits of idolatry. They began burning incense to the queen of heaven. This was another name for the pagan goddess Ishtar, the Mesopotamian goddess of love and war (44:8-10, 15-19).
- (5) Jeremiah pronounced the divine death penalty upon all who refused to repent and return to Jerusalem (44:7-14, 28).
- (6) To dramatize this bitter truth, he buried some large rocks between the pavement stones at the entrance of Pharaoh's palace. This signified that Nebuchadnezzar would occupy Egypt and set his throne upon those stones. Jeremiah predicted he would then kill many of the Jewish remnant who refused to return. The others would die of various plagues or be enslaved (43:9-13).

2. Groups he ministered to

- a. Jeremiah cautioned the majority — He warned the majority still in Judah about the coming Babylonian Captivity.
 - (1) He pleaded with Judah to return to God (3:12-14; 26:1-7).
 - (a) God would repeatedly invite Israel back to him (2:9).
 - (b) He would receive Israel even after her immorality with other lovers (3:1).
 - (2) Jeremiah pleaded with them to plow up the hardness of their hearts, lest all be choked up by thorns and suffer the fire of God's wrath (4:3-4).
 - (a) They could still escape judgment by cleansing their hearts and purifying their thoughts (4:14).
 - (b) To repent meant they could remain in the land (7:3). To refuse meant to be covered by thick darkness (13:16).
 - (3) He fearlessly pronounced coming judgment at the hands of the Babylonians. He then outlined Judah's sins, often using metaphors and similes.
 - (a) Judah had forsaken the fountain of divine water (2:13).
 - (b) They had built broken cisterns which could not hold water (2:13).
 - (c) The nation had become a race of evil men, symbolized by good seed producing a degenerate plant (2:21).
 - (d) No amount of soap or lye could make them clean (2:22).

- (e) The rulers had stained their clothes with the blood of the innocent and poor (2:34).
 - (f) They were as an unashamed prostitute (3:3).
 - (g) They worshipped false gods upon every hill and under every shade tree (3:6).
 - (h) They had killed their prophets as a lion would slaughter his prey (2:30).
 - (i) They were as insolent as brass, and hard and cruel as iron (6:28).
 - (j) They had set up idols right in the temple and worshiped the pagan queen of heaven (7:18; 44:17). "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger" (7:18).
 - (k) They had actually sacrificed their little children as burnt offerings to devil gods (7:31; 19:5).
- (4) He warned them concerning the terrible results of their disobedience.
- (a) Great armies would march upon Jerusalem (1:14-15).
 - (b) Neither Assyria nor Egypt would be able to help Judah against Babylon (2:18, 36).
 - (c) People would flee from Judah's cities as one runs from a hungry lion (4:5-7).
 - (d) Jerusalem would be surrounded, as hunters would move in on a wild and wounded animal (4:17; 6:3-5).
 - (e) They would cry out as a woman in delivery (4:31; 6:24; 13:21).
 - (f) Jerusalem's own trees would be cut down and used against her walls as battering rams (6:6).
 - (g) The temple would be destroyed (7:14).
 - (h) Enemy troops would then move among the people like poisonous snakes (8:17).
 - (i) Many would die by the following methods: sword (15:3); disease (21:9); starvation (21:9).
 - (j) Some would be scattered as chaff by the fierce desert winds (13:24). Unburied corpses would litter the valleys outside Jerusalem, and become food for wild animals and birds (7:32; 9:22; 12:8-9; 15:3).
 - (k) Judah's enemies would break open the sacred graves of her kings, priests, and prophets, and spread out their bones on the ground before the sun, moon, and stars (8:1-2).
 - (l) Thousands would be carried away into Babylon for a period of 70 years (7:15; 25:11; 29:10).
 - (m) The severity of Judah's punishment would astonish the onlooking pagan Gentile nations (19:8; 22:8; 25:11).

- (5) When the people ridiculed and rejected his message, the warning prophet became the weeping prophet (4:19; 8:21; 9:1-2, 10; 13:17; 14:17). "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (9:1).
- b. Jeremiah comforted the minority—Jeremiah wrote a letter of encouragement to the Jewish exiles in Babylon (29:1-32).
 - (1) They were to settle down for a long 70-year stay.
 - (2) They were to pray for the peace and prosperity of Babylon, that their own lives might be peaceful.
 - (3) They were to ignore the lies of those false prophets and mediums there in Babylon, lest they be punished along with them.
 - (a) Jeremiah pronounced God's death sentence upon two of these prophets named Ahab and Zedekiah for their lying messages and their sin of adultery (29:20-23).
 - (b) He also warned the exiles concerning a man named Shemaiah, who was sending poison pen letters from Babylon to the influential leaders in Jerusalem against Jeremiah (29:24-32).
 - (4) God still loved them and would someday bring them back to Jerusalem. "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive" (29:11-14).
- c. Jeremiah condemned the multitudes—He pronounced judgment upon nine Gentile nations (46-51).
 - (1) Egypt (46:1-26)
 - (2) Philistia (47:1-6)
 - (3) Moab (48:1-47)
 - (4) Ammon (49:1-6)
 - (5) Edom (49:7-22)
 - (6) Damascus (49:23-27)
 - (7) Kedar and Hazor (49:28-33)
 - (8) Elam (49:34-39)
 - (9) Babylon (50-51)—Two Babylons seems to be referred to in these verses.
 - (a) One is the historical Babylon, captured by Darius the Persian in October of 539 B.B. (Dan. 5).
 - (b) The other is future Babylon which will be destroyed by God himself (Rev. 17-18).

- (c) After the destruction of both Babylons, Israel would seek their God. This happened historically (Ezra 1); and it will occur in the future (Zech. 13:9).
- (d) After the final destruction of Babylon (Rev. 18) the city will never be inhabited again (Jer. 51:26).
- (e) The ungodly nations would weep over the destruction of both Babylons (Jer. 50:46; Rev. 18).
- (f) The Israelites were to flee from both Babylons (Jer. 51:6; Rev. 18:4).
- (g) Both cities are depicted as golden cups filled with iniquities from which the nations have drunk and become mad (Jer. 51:7; Rev. 17:1-6).
- (h) All heaven would rejoice over the destruction of both Babylons (Jer. 51:10; 48; Rev. 18:20).

II. The public prophecies of Jeremiah

A. The group prophecies

1. Concerning Judah's people

- a. The fall of Jerusalem (1:14-16; 4:5-9; 5:15-17; 6:1-6; 32:2-3; 38:17-18)
- b. The destruction of the temple (7:11-15; 26:6-9)
- c. The 70-year captivity of Judah into Babylon (25:11; 29:10)
 Note: In 31:15-16, Jeremiah predicted that the loud wails and bitter weeping of Rachel for her children in Ramah would disappear. Ramah is an ancient reference to the area in and around Bethlehem. It was here that Nebuchadnezzar killed many sick and feeble exile captives who would not be able to endure the long trip to Babylon. Rachel, the historical wife of Jacob, is of course symbolic of all weeping Israelite mothers. In Matthew 2:18 this sad verse is linked to that occasion when Herod murdered the babies of Bethlehem in an attempt to kill Christ.
- d. The kindly treatment of the exiles in Babylon (24:1-7)
- e. The restoration after the 70 years to Jerusalem (27:19-22; 30:3, 10-11, 18-21; 31:9, 12, 38-39; 33:3-9)
 - (1) Israel would be gathered back from all over the world (3:14; 31:8-10; 32:37-43).
 - (2) God would appoint for them leaders after his own heart (3:15).
 - (3) Palestine would once again be filled with the glory of God, and the people of God (3:16-18). This would be a far greater and grander event than that of the original Exodus, when he brought them out of Egypt (16:14-15; 23:7).
 - (4) A Righteous Branch (the Savior) will occupy King David's throne, ruling with wisdom and justice (23:5-6; 30:21; 33:17).
 - (5) Jerusalem will be rebuilt and filled with joy and great thanksgiving (31:4, 7-9, 12-14, 23-25; 33:10-12).
 - (6) During the Millennium, Israel will understand the necessity for and the purpose of all their sufferings (31:18-19).

- (7) The cities of Israel will be rebuilt and Jerusalem will become the praise and power center of all the earth (30:18-21; 31:38-39; 33:7-9).
2. Concerning Judah's potentates
 - a. The death of the deposed Judean King Jehoahaz in Egypt (22:10-12)
 - b. The ignoble and unlamented death of King Jehoiakim (36:29-30)
 - (1) He soundly condemned Jehoiakim for his wicked reign (22:13-19).
 - (a) He was constructing an extravagant palace with forced labor.
 - (b) He had murdered the innocent and oppressed the poor.
 - (c) He was filled with selfish greed and dishonesty.
 - (2) About this time one of Jeremiah's fellow prophets, Urijah, was murdered by Jehoiakim for his fearless preaching (26:20-23). Therefore, Jeremiah predicted the following:
 - (a) The king would die unlamented.
 - (b) He would be buried like a dead donkey.
 - (c) He would be dragged out of Jerusalem.
 - (d) He would be thrown on the garbage dump beyond the gate.
 - c. The cutting off from the royal line of King Jehoiachin (22:24-30)
 - (1) This young son of Jehoiakim ruled only three months, but so aroused the divine wrath of heaven that, Jeremiah was told, had he been the signet ring of God's right hand, he would still have been cast off and given to the Babylonians (22:24-25).
 - (2) Jeremiah predicted that this 90-day wonder would:
 - (a) Be given over to Nebuchadnezzar
 - (b) Be cast out of the land along with his mother
 - (c) Die in a foreign land
 - (d) Be regarded as a discarded and broken dish
 - (e) Be considered childless (even though he had offspring) as far as the throne of David was concerned (22:25-29)
 - d. The capture of Zedekiah (21:3-7; 34:1-5; 37:17; see 39:4-7; 52:6-11 for fulfillment)
3. Concerning Judah's prophets
 - a. The death of two false prophets (Zedekiah and Ahab) and the punishment of another (Shemaiah) who were ministering among the first Jewish captive exiles in Babylon (29:20-32)
 - b. The death of a false Jerusalem prophet named Hananiah (28:13-17)—Jeremiah predicted Hananiah's death in the near future by God's hand for his lying ministry. Within two years he was dead.
4. Concerning Judah's persecutors
 - a. The failure of the Egyptian-Judean military alliance against Babylon (37:5-10)
 - b. The defeat of Egypt by Babylon (46:1-26)—Jeremiah described in vivid detail the world-famous battle at Carchemish at the very moment when it was being

fought. Egypt suffered a resounding defeat at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar (46:1-12).

- c. The eventual occupation of Egypt by Babylon (43:9-13)
 - d. The defeat of Babylon after the 70 years (25:12; 27:7)—Note: The punishment Babylon would receive from God as found in Jeremiah 50 and 51 evidently referred not only to the historical judgment (Dan. 5), but also that future judgment (Rev. 18). Jeremiah warned a man named Seraiah that he would be taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar at a later date. This literally happened some six years later (51:59). Seraiah was then given a scroll containing Jeremiah's prophecies against Babylon. The prophet commanded him to publicly read it when he arrived there and then to tie a rock to the scroll and throw it into the Euphrates River. This symbolized that Babylon would sink, never to rise again (51:60-64).
- B. The great prophecy—The New Covenant (31:31-34)
- 1. The nature of the New Covenant (31:31-34)
 - a. It would embrace the entire house of Israel.
 - b. It would be totally unlike the old Mosaic Covenant.
 - c. God would inscribe his laws upon their hearts. Israel had always suffered with self-inflicted spiritual heart trouble.
 - (1) The divine diagnosis—"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart" (17:1).
 - (2) The divine prognosis—Under the New Covenant the heavenly Physician would offer them perfect and guaranteed successful heart transplants. This nation with the new hearts would then once again become God's people, and he their God.
 - 2. The time of the New Covenant
 - a. It will go into effect "after those days" (31:33).
 - b. It will follow the "time of Jacob's trouble" (30:7).
 - c. Both these terms refer to the coming great tribulation. Thus, the New Covenant will begin to function after the time of Jacob's trouble, at the start of the glorious millennium.
 - 3. The superiority of the New Covenant
 - a. It will be eternal as opposed to the Mosaic Covenant (Exod. 19:5-8; Jer. 31:32). God himself assured Israel of the duration of this New Covenant when he declared: "If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel" (31:37; see also 33:20-26).
 - b. It will be unconditional (31:34).
 - c. It will be immutable (31:36-37).
 - 4. The Mediator of the New Covenant—The Son of David himself (30:9; 33:15-18).

THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- I. Jeremiah's great prophecy concerning the 70-year Babylonian Captivity (Jer. 29:10) is referred to by three Old Testament authors.
 - A. The author of 2 Chronicles mentioned it (2 Chron. 36:21).
 - B. Ezra mentioned it (Ezra 1:1).
 - C. Daniel referred to it (Dan. 9:2).
- II. Matthew recorded the tragic fulfillment of two of Jeremiah's prophecies.
 - A. Concerning the slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem (compare Jer. 31:15 with Matt. 2:17-18)
 - B. Concerning the purchase of a potter's field where Judas was buried (compare Jer. 32:6-9 with Matt. 27:9-10).
- III. Some of the Jews in the time of Christ believed the Savior was really a return of Jeremiah (Matt. 16:14).
- IV. Jeremiah was the most persecuted prophet in the Old Testament, and in many ways his sufferings foreshadowed the sufferings of Christ.
 - A. Both were mistreated by their own families (Jer. 12:6; John 7:5).
 - B. Both were plotted against by the citizens of their own hometowns (Jer. 11:21; Luke 4:28-30).
 - C. Both were hated by the religious world (Jer. 26:7-9; John 11:47-53).
 - D. Both were denounced by the two leading synagogue leaders of their day (Jer. 20:1; 28:1; John 18:13, 24).
 - E. Both were temporarily aided by a ruler (Jer. 38:16; Luke 23:4).
 - F. Both were described in similar fashion (Jer. 11:19; Isa. 53:7).
 - G. Both wept often over the city of Jerusalem (Jer. 9:1; Matt. 23:37; Luke 19:41).
 - H. Both predicted the destruction of the temple in their day (Jer. 7:11-15; Matt. 24:1-2).
- V. Jeremiah, like Job, on occasion suffered from extreme depression (Job 3; Jer. 20:14-18).
- VI. Like Elijah, Jeremiah once decided to resign (1 Kings 19:4; Jer. 20:9).
- VII. However, he persevered, and his book became a great source of inspiration to the prophet Daniel years later (Dan. 9:2).
- VIII. The book of Jeremiah gives the final of three great immutable Old Testament covenants.
 - A. The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3)—This had to do with a land (Canaan), a people (Israel), and a Savior.
 - B. The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:4-16; 1 Chron. 17:3-15)—This had to do with a king to rule in that land over that people.
 - C. The New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34)—This has to do with changed hearts so that the people in the land will allow that king to rule over them.
- IX. Jeremiah may have been the only biblical writer to have died in Egypt.

STATISTICS

Father: Hilkiah (Jer. 1:1)

First mention: 2 Chronicles 35:25

Final mention: Matthew 27:9

Meaning of his name: "Jehovah is high"

Frequency of his name: Referred to 134 times

Biblical books mentioning him: Five books (2 Chronicles, Ezra, Jeremiah, Daniel, Matthew)

Occupation: Prophet (Matt. 27:9)

Place of birth: Anathoth, in Israel (Jer. 1:1)

Place of death: Egypt

Important fact about his life: He was known as the weeping prophet and authored the longest book in the Bible (apart from the Psalms).